



April 23, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL TO MEET IN BURNS

The next Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) meeting is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, May 8-9, 2003, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday, in the conference room at the Burns District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Office, 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon. Thursday's agenda will begin with updates from the Chairman and Designated Federal Official and an update from the District Planning and Environmental Coordinator regarding the Preliminary Draft Andrews/Steens Resource Management Plan (RMP) followed by a discussion on the Wilderness Management Plan. In the afternoon, the SMAC will continue discussion on the Wilderness Management Plan as well as pursue discussions on camping, special recreation permit Environmental Assessments (EAs) update, and Wild and Scenic River designations.

On Friday, the SMAC will spend the majority of the day discussing particular EAs within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA), including the Projects for Implementation of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act (Steens Act) of 2000, Permittee Access EA, and Landowner Access EA. Any other matters that may reasonably come before the SMAC may also be discussed throughout the course of the meeting.

If you have information you would like distributed to SMAC members, please send it to Rhonda Karges at the BLM, Burns District Office, 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738, no later than 10 days prior to the start of the meeting. If you send information or general correspondence to anyone at the Burns District Office and would like a courtesy copy given to the SMAC, please write "COPY TO SMAC" on the envelope and enclosed document(s) and mail to the address given above.

To date, the SMAC has met 13 times and worked at length on the transportation plan, recommending road definitions and maintenance levels, and delineating those maintenance levels on a map. Several recommendations have been made regarding the wild horse and burro program, winter recreation, wilderness management, landowner access, and recreation activities as well. Most recently, at the April meeting, the SMAC reviewed all proposed management actions in the Preliminary Draft RMP and made recommendations for the agency to consider throughout the planning process.

The Draft RMP will be available for public comment late summer/early fall 2003. After the release of the RMP, the public will be provided a 90-day comment period. The BLM encourages all members of the public to submit comments during that period.

The public is welcome to attend all portions of any SMAC meeting, and may contribute during public comment sessions scheduled at 11:00 a.m. each day. Unless otherwise approved by the SMAC Chair, the public comment periods will last no longer than 30 minutes, and each speaker will address the SMAC for a maximum of 5 minutes.

Current SMAC members and their representative category of constituents are listed below:

Richard Benner - No Financial Interest
Stacy Davies - Grazing Permittee
Alice Elshoff - Environmental Representative-Local
Michael Golden - Dispersed Recreation
E. Ron Harding - Wild Horse Management
Tom Harris, Chair - Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation
Wanda Johnson - Burns Paiute Tribe
Jason Miner - Fish and Recreational Fishing
Jerry Sutherland, Vice Chair - Environmental Representative-State
Hoyt Wilson - Grazing Permittee
Cynthia Witzel - Recreation Permit Holder
Harland Yriarte - Private Landowner
Steve Purchase - State Government Liaison (nonvoting member)

The Designated Federal Official is Karla Bird, Andrews Resource Area Field Manager.

For further information on the SMAC or the upcoming meeting, contact Rhonda Karges at the Burns District Office at 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon, or call (541) 573-4400, weekdays, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. You may also check the Steens Web site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/Steens> for more information.